

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow. Applicants respectfully assert that entry of the requested amendments would place the application in condition for allowance. Alternatively, entry of the requested amendments would place the application in better form for consideration on appeal.

As a preliminary matter, Applicants note the Office Action's reconsideration of the Information Disclosure Statements originally submitted on July 12, 2005 and October 22, 2003.

Claim 14 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,707,180 to Hattori et al. (hereinafter "Hattori") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,329,731 to Arbanas et al. (hereinafter "Arbanas"). Alternatively, claim 14 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,728,840 to Newhouse in view of Arbanas. Claims 1 and 3-13 have been allowed and claims 15-22 stand objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

By this amendment, claim 15 has been canceled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein. Thus, any outstanding rejection with respect to this claim has been rendered moot. Independent claim 14 has been amended to further define the subject matter Applicants regard as the invention as discussed in greater detail below. Claims 1, 3-13 and 17-22 remain unchanged.

This amendment changes, adds, and/or deletes claims in this application. A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claim(s) remain under examination in the application, is presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier. Thus, claims 1, 3-14 and 16-22 are presently pending in this application.

THE CLAIMS DISTINGUISH OVER THE CITED REFERENCES

Claim 14 stands rejected as being unpatenable over the combination of Hattori and Arbanas as well as the combination of Newhouse and Arbanas. Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Office Action's indication that claims 1 and 3-13 have been allowed and that claims 5-22 contain allowable subject matter. Although Applicants respectfully submit that the invention which is the subject matter of rejected claim 14 may be patentable over either of the combinations of cited references, Applicants at this time intend to pursue patent protection for the allowable subject matter recited in claim 15. The amendments to independent claim 14 to incorporate the allowable subject matter recited in canceled claim 15 is not meant to concede to the appropriateness of the rejection of claim 14, but merely to expedite prosecution of the patent application. Therefore, Applicants submit that amended independent claim 14 and claims dependent directly or indirectly therefrom, namely claims 16-22 are allowable as well.

Further remarks regarding the asserted relationship between any of the claims and the cited references is not necessary in view of their allowability. Applicants' silence as to the Office Action's comments is not indicative of being in acquiescence to the stated grounds of rejection.

Applicants believe that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.


The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check or credit card payment form being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicants hereby petition for

such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorize payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

Date AUG 16 2006

By 

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